

REMARKS

This paper is presented in response to the Office Action. Claim 1 is cancelled and claims 2-5 are amended. Claims 2-24 are now pending in this application as a result of the aforementioned cancellation.

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the new claims and the following remarks. For the convenience and reference of the Examiner, the remarks of the Applicant are presented in the order in which the corresponding issues were raised in the Office Action.

I. Claim Rejections

a. General considerations

In connection with the matters contemplated herein, Applicant respectfully notes that the claim amendments presented herein have been submitted merely to clarify aspects of various embodiments in view of elements purported by the Examiner to be taught by the cited references. Such claim amendments should not be construed as acquiescence, on the part of the Applicant, as to the purported teachings or prior art status of the cited references, nor as to the characterization of the cited references advanced by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicant reserves the right to challenge the purported teaching and prior art status of the cited references at any appropriate time.

b. claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(b)

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-3 as obvious in view of US 6,441,937 to Baer. Applicant disagrees with the contentions of the Examiner but submits that in light of the cancellation of claim 1 herein, the rejection of that claim has been rendered moot and should be withdrawn.

Applicant further submits that in light of the amendments herein to claims 2 and 3, the rejection of those claims has been overcome and should be withdrawn. Particularly, claims 2 and 3 have been amended to depend from claim 4, which has been rewritten in independent form as suggested by the Examiner.

II. Objection to Claims 4-6

The Examiner has objected to claims 4-6 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but has indicated that those claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Accordingly, Applicant has rewritten claims 4 and 5 in independent form. Original claim 6 remains dependent from claim 5. In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 4-6 are now in allowable condition.

III. Allowed Claims 7-24

Applicant acknowledges with thanks the indication of the Examiner that claims 7-24 are allowed, and Applicant also wishes to thank the Examiner for the careful review of those claims.

Applicant submits the following comments concerning the Examiner's statements of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter in the Office Action. In general, Applicant agrees with the Examiner that the inventions to which claims 7-24 are directed are patentable over the cited references, but respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's statement of reasons for allowance as set forth in the Office Action.

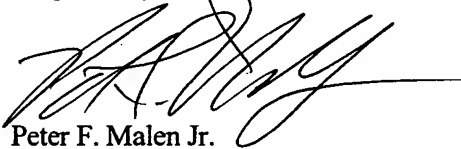
Particularly, Applicant submits that it is improper to characterize a single limitation, or subset of limitations, as constituting the basis for allowance of a claim. Rather, the patentability of a claim is properly determined with reference to the claim as a whole. Accordingly, Applicant does not concede that the reasons for allowable subject matter given by the Examiner are the only reasons that make, or would make, the claims allowable and Applicant does not make any admission or concession concerning the Examiner's statement in the Office Action.

CONCLUSION

In view of the remarks and amendments submitted herein, Applicant respectfully submits that each of the pending claims 2-24 is now in condition for allowance. Therefore, reconsideration of the rejections is requested and allowance of those claims is respectfully solicited. In the event that the Examiner finds any remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of this application that could be clarified in a telephonic interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to initiate the same with the undersigned attorney.

Dated this 3RD day of August, 2005.

Respectfully submitted,



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